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PHOTO CONSTRUCTIONS

by

Silvia Lizama

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

MFA PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM
SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS AND SCIENCES
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
July, 1983

Bea Nettles

Bea Nettles, Chairperson
Associate Professor
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences

Charles Werberig

Charles Werberig
Associate Professor
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences

John Dodd

John Dodd
Lecturer
College of Fine and Applied Art, R.I.T.

Richard Norman

Richard Norman, Technical Adviser
Technical Associate
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences

Title of Thesis: PHOTO CONSTRUCTIONS

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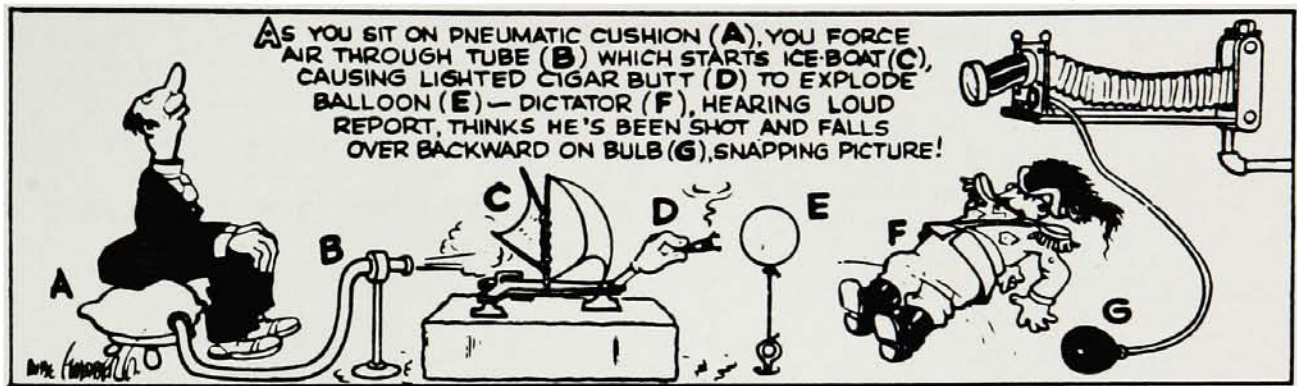
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Date:

July, 1983

Silvia Lizama

This Thesis is solely dedicated to Joe Gillis for
his help, support and understanding.



Professor Butts' Automatic Picture-Snapping Machine

by Rube Goldberg

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INTRODUCTION

When I was a child, at least once a month, my parents would gather all the kids and drive us to the Miami Museum of Science. It was informative, fun and free.

My four sisters and I would spend hour after hour looking at the all too familiar displays and enjoying every second of it. Each display was mechanized in such a way that the viewer could trigger a response either by turning a dial, pushing a button or picking up a phone.

My participation and involvement with the displays made the experience fun and unforgettable.

The idea for my thesis stemmed from a desire to spend time on a photography project with which the public could interact and hopefully be entertained.

My response to this desire was to have a mixed media thesis presentation incorporating wood and found objects in combination with two-dimensional imagery.

At first I approached this idea from an advertiser's point of view. I did research in the Advertising and Marketing section of the library, because I felt I had a product to show and I wanted to find out to what the public would best respond and react.

Billboards and moving cardboard displays are effectively used in the advertising field to catch our interest and

direct our attention to the product at hand. I felt this advertising principle could be applied in an entertaining manner towards the creation of environments for a photographic exhibition. I wanted to go one step further and invite the public to play with and enjoy the visual presentations.

My plan was not to intimidate but to visually entice the viewer into participating with the images presented.

During the week that the exhibition was displayed, I noticed the reactions to the work were very diverse. Some people chose to look at the work from a distance, in the traditional manner. Others chose to playfully respond to what I presented and others seemed to be thoroughly entertained by watching those people who were interacting with the work.

I was pleased and satisfied with the response to the presentation. My hope was that the people would take more notice of the work since they were directly involved with it. Curiosity was the human trait that I depended on to insure a response from the viewer; when we see a handle, we want to pull it; when we see a switch, we want to turn it on.

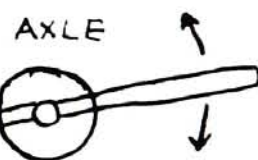
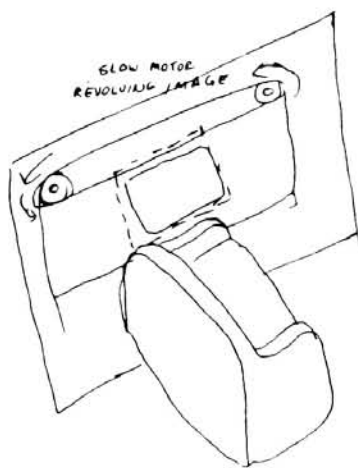
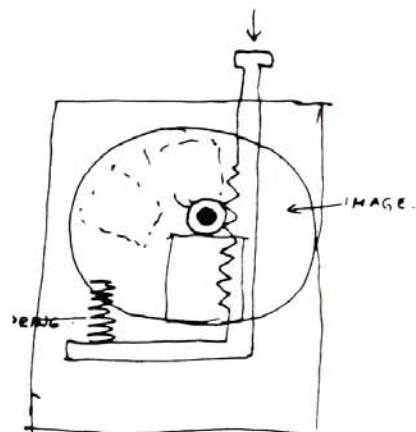
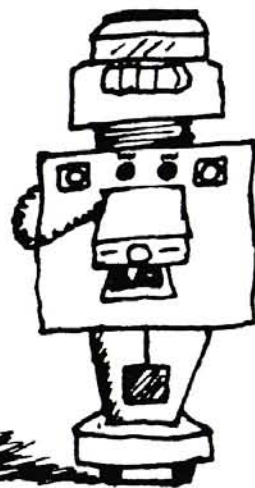
The planning and production of the displays necessitated a knowledge and understanding of the materials to be used, including their limitations and capabilities. The following discussion will deal with these technical matters as well

as the aesthetic concerns with which I was involved in the development of my thesis exhibit.

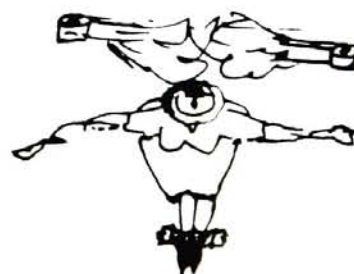
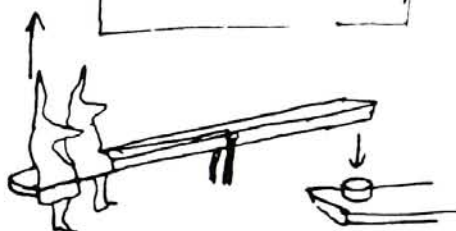
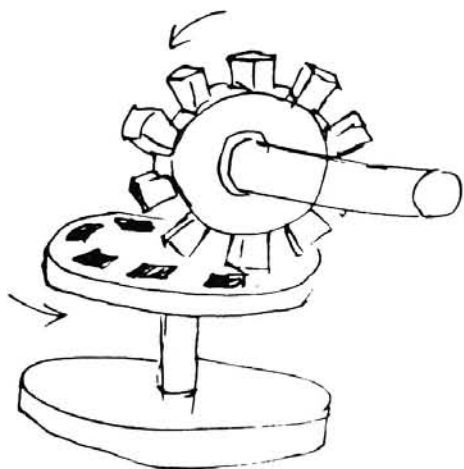
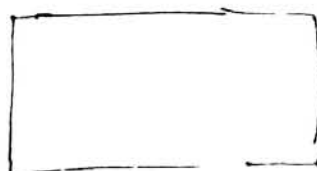
DISCUSSION

Throughout the course of my research and planning, I was constantly coming up with ideas which I felt would be suitable for the type of thesis display I had in mind. More often than not, the ideas were ridiculous and far-fetched but they served as stepping stones toward new ideas which eventually materialized (see Journal Sketch p.5). The displays underwent much modification and adaptation from my original conception to their final form.

For the purpose of organization, I will divide this discussion into four sections, consisting of the research, planning and subsequent evolution of the four pieces I exhibited for my Master of Fine Arts Thesis Show. They are as follows: The Puzzle, Water Squirting One-Armed Bandit, Stereo Cubes and Dancing TV.



SX-70 ROBOT.



The Puzzle

The first display I seriously considered building is patterned after a small toy that I spent many hours playing with as a child. The toy was a cheap plastic 2 by 2 inch square puzzle that contained the numbers one through fifteen inside the puzzle frame. By moving the square pieces within the frame, one could scramble and unscramble the numbers.

The possibility of using this concept with images seemed ideal. The viewer could recreate the original image or compose countless other images.

I figured this would be a good starting piece for a participation oriented exhibition.

Since I had no formal training in woodworking, my first step was to enroll in an introductory woodworking course. I approached my instructor, John Dodd, with an idea, some sketches and a 2 by 2 inch plastic puzzle as a model. I knew that if it could be done in plastic, I could do it in wood.

I had a few criteria that had to be met. The photographs had to be behind glass for protection and the frames had to be constructed so that the photographs could be removed and/or replaced. These criteria made the design of the piece very complicated.

Once the final design was finished, I began to work on the actual construction of the puzzle. Having had two

days training on the use and misuse of the Wood Shop machinery, I proceeded to transform what seemed to me to be a tree trunk into "fine art".

At John Dodd's suggestion, I used Cherry wood for the frames because of its strength and color and I used Baltic Birch plywood for the frame backings because of its quality, dependability and tolerance to weather conditions.

With help from many people in the Wood Shop, I worked out numerous technical problems; from what machinery to use, to the size and type of screws I needed.

To facilitate matters at this point, I engaged the help of Debbie Cherry Mosch from the Frame Shop, for the actual cutting and construction of the molding I had made. We used the store's frame chopper for cutting perfect 45 degree angles and the vises for putting the sixteen frames together. This saved me a lot of time and frustration.

Due to weather changes, I noticed that some days the puzzle pieces would not slide smoothly. I had to trim down the frames several times until there was sufficient room on all sides for proper movement.

I sanded the piece more than I thought humanly possible, working my way down from the coarse sand papers to the final extra-super fine, which left the wood with a smooth glass-like finish.

Finally, I applied three coats of Deft Lacquer to the Cherry frames for protection. The lacquer finish does not darken the wood as much as an oil finish. I wanted to keep

the overall tone of the wood light, so that the frame grid would not overpower the images.

During the eight weeks that it took me to construct the puzzle, I was constantly thinking about the images that would work best within the piece.

I spent five days building models of "bird-planes" that I was planning to shoot for the puzzle (see Journal Sketches p.11). I built fifteen different models; ducks with propellers, World War II planes with dove wings, helicopter birds, etc.. I photographed them with an elaborate set-up of lights, glass and background paper. I developed and printed the negatives only to realize that it was not going to work. I was extremely unhappy with the results. The tiny images of the "bird-planes" were lost within the fifteen puzzle frames that I had constructed.

To solve this problem I decided to shoot fifteen images that, when put together, would make up one large image.

After taking a quick look out the cold, frost-filled window, I decided to confine my shooting strictly to the indoors. I found a perfect room in our attic for what I had in mind. The small, empty, white room had a non-functioning sink and a frosted glass window awkwardly opening into a dark hallway.

I gathered all my props, furniture, lights and camera equipment and began to shoot. I used a Hasselblad with a

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch square negative and black and white film. I intended to handcolor the photographs so that I would have more control over the atmosphere.

I marked the floor where I placed the tripod and systematically photographed three quarters of the room from a stationary position.

To complicate matters, I decided to add one more element to the entire image. I photographed a 6 foot cardboard Superman in random parts of the room, so that it too could be pieced together to form one image. If Superman was put together, then the room would not make sense. If the room was properly assembled, then Superman would be dismembered throughout the puzzle.

The shooting took approximately seven hours but I felt confident about the image. When I developed the negatives, I found my shutter had gone off intermittently and only half of the pictures had come out. I repeated the ordeal the next day, developed the negatives and made the prints. I was satisfied with the image but not with the print quality. The negative exposures were uneven and it showed when the puzzle was put together. Once again I spent the day in the attic. Through practice I was getting faster and was able to trim down my shooting time to five hours. I carefully developed the film the following day. A contaminated batch of D-76 ruined my day. I seriously considered giving up photography and joining the French Foreign Legion. I somehow snapped out of my depression long enough to reshoot

the attic for what turned out to be the last time.

With a successful set of negatives, I printed the photographs. Though each reshoot was frustrating, it slightly changed and improved the overall composition every time. I was much happier with the final result.

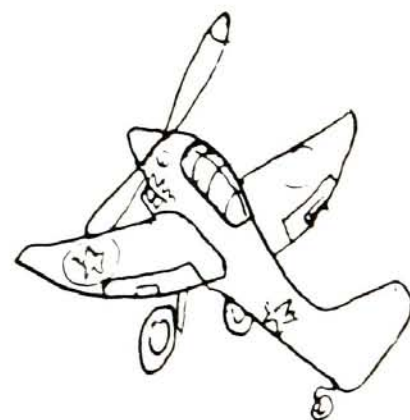
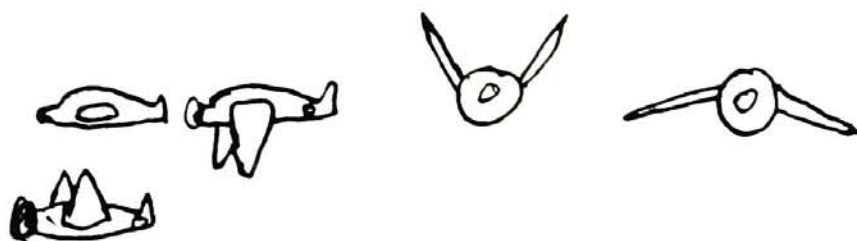
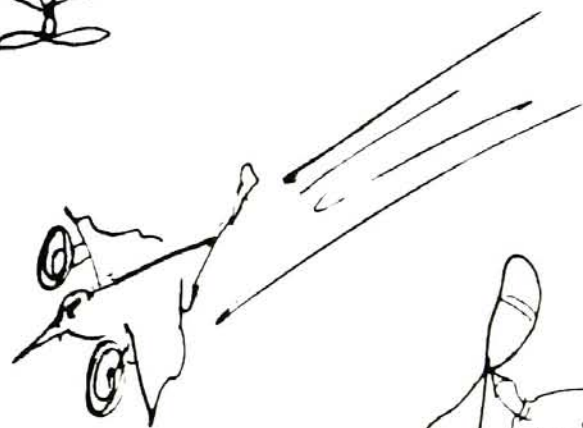
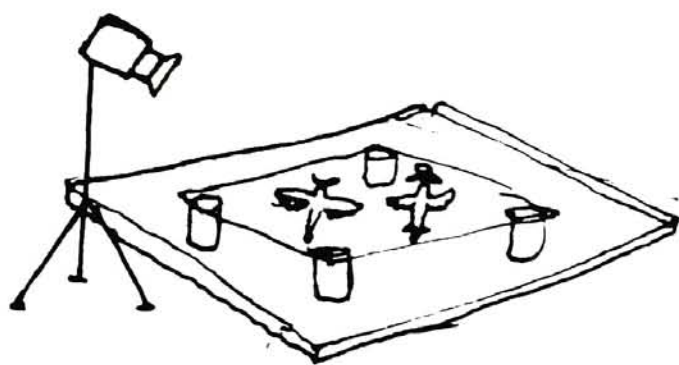
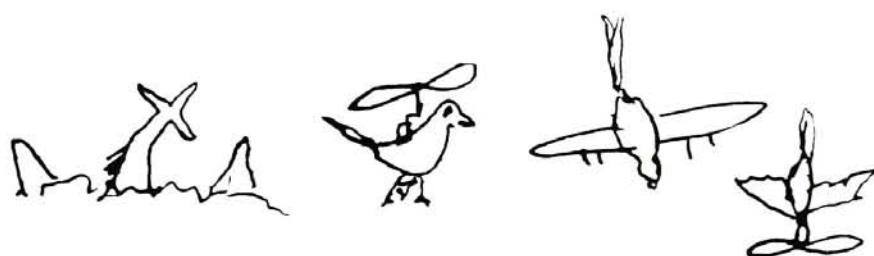
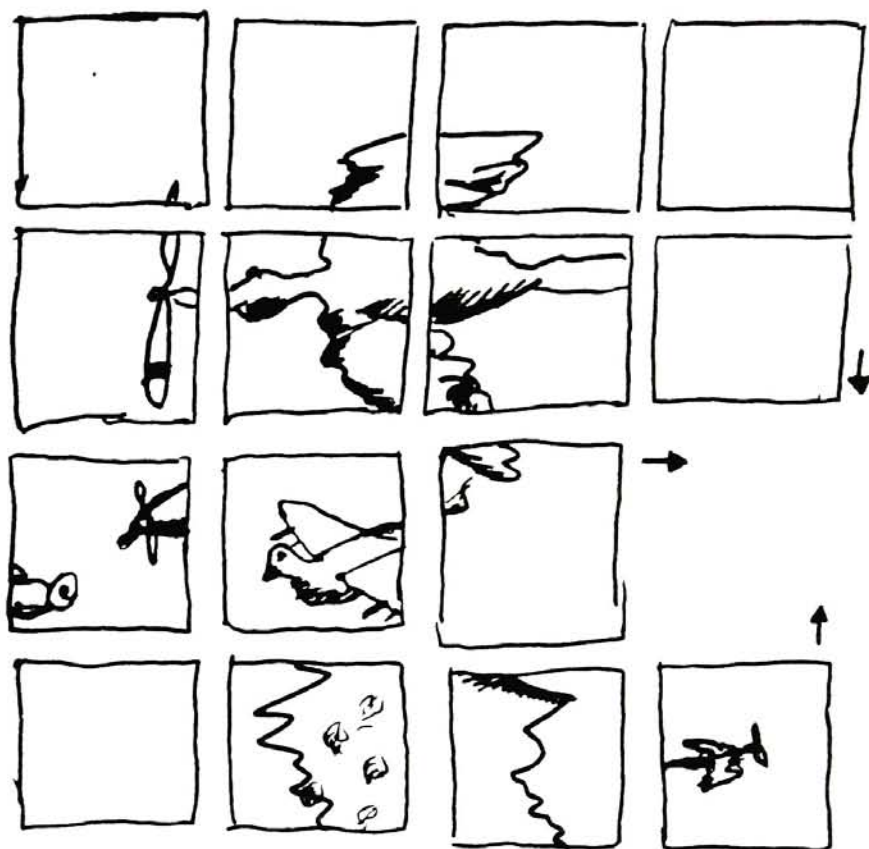
I decided to handcolor the room with bright, animated colors. I chose baby pink for the walls, cadmium yellow for the trim and oxide green for the floor.

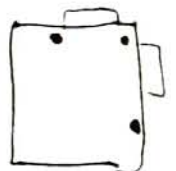
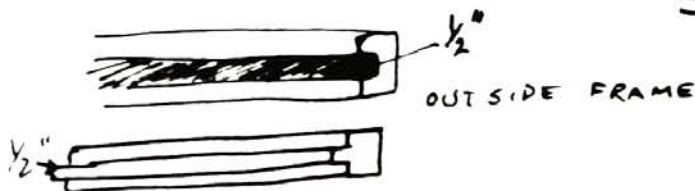
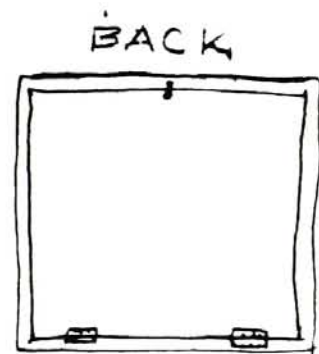
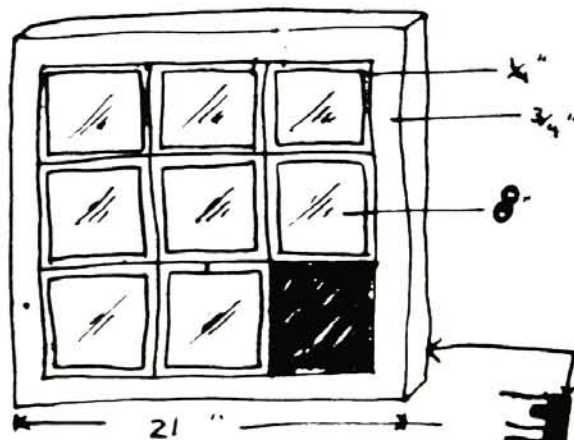
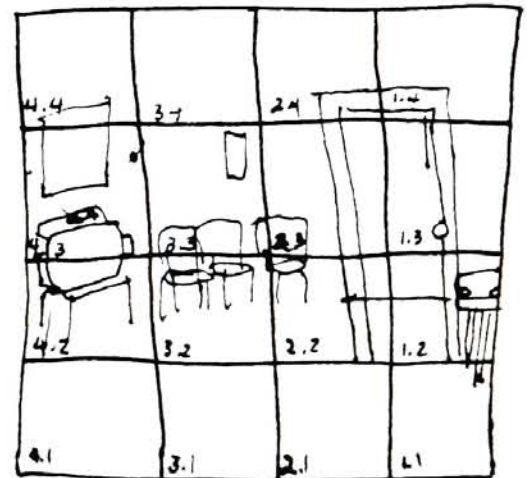
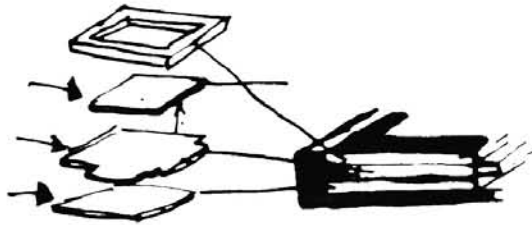
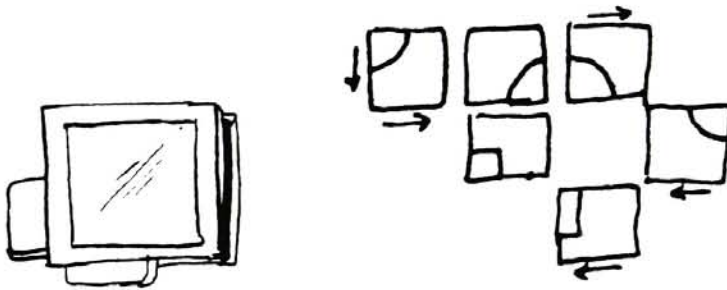
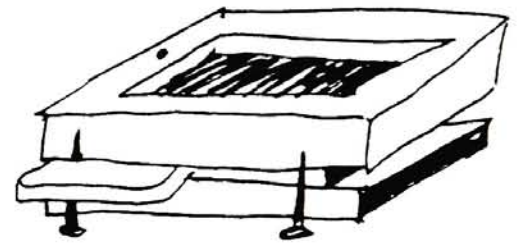
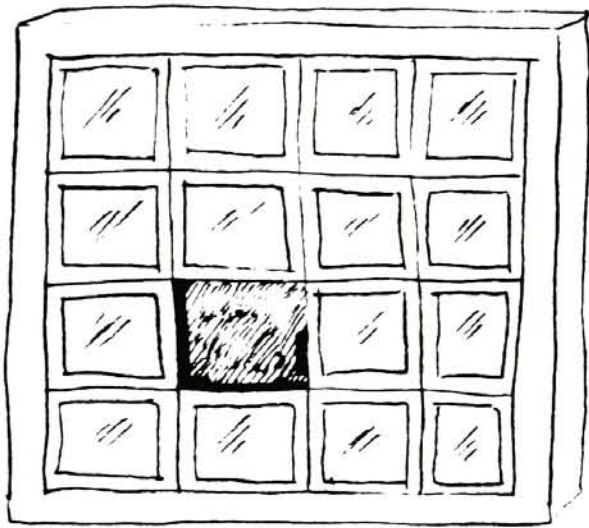
Once the oils had dried, I placed the photographs inside their individual frames and my first piece was totally complete.

I knew the gallery had a square glass case that was the proper height for the puzzle. I made a black foam core cover for the glass to enhance the display.

I attached an answer sheet to the case, for those who might get frustrated not knowing what the original image looked like (see Journal Sketch p.15).

The last step was to properly light the puzzle in the gallery. I placed two lights at each side of the case at an approximate 45 degree angle. This seemed to be the best way to avoid glare from the glass and shadows from the people playing with the puzzle. With this final step the piece was complete and ready for the public.

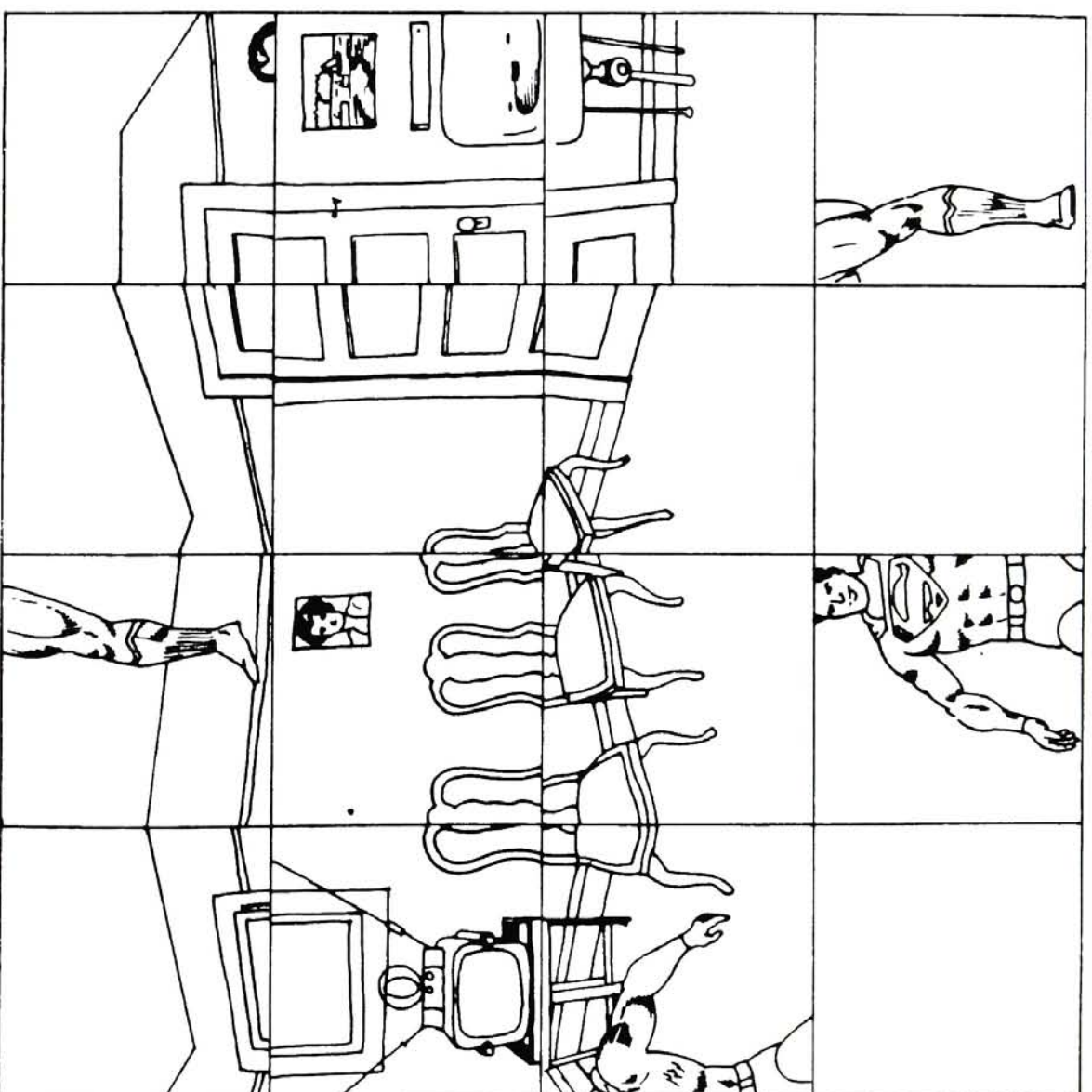
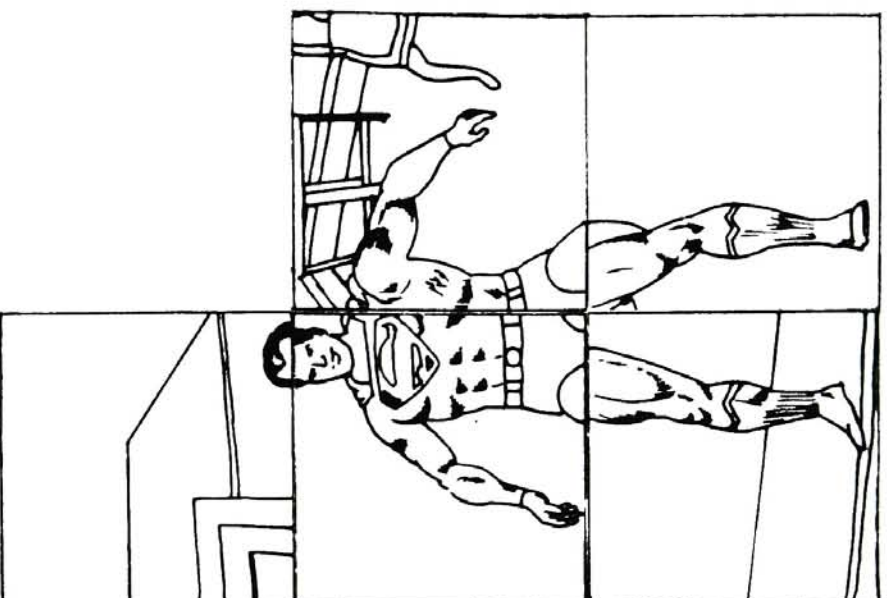








ANSWER:



Water Squirting One-Armed Bandit

One sure fire way to add life to a dull party is to bring out the old squirting camera, water pistol or squirting slot machine. There is something so ridiculous about getting splashed in the face that you can't help but laugh.

This was the inspiration for my second piece, the "Water Squirting One-Armed Bandit". In order to view the images spinning around on the drum, the viewer would have to get wet. I could not think of a better way to show images of water.

I anxiously ripped apart my 4 inch plastic, squirting slot machine to inspect the inside mechanisms. It seemed simple enough to me and I could foresee no problems in reconstructing the piece to suit my needs. There were, however, a few gears with which I knew I would need help. For this I engaged the help of the technical wizard, Dick Norman, who graciously accepted his new title as the Technical Advisor of my Thesis Board.

By the time I had finished showing Dick Norman my plans, he had arrived at plans of his own. He proceeded to tell me how the slot machine could be made to work much more efficiently and effectively, through a complicated series of gears and springs. I instantly hired him for the job. For three months I bothered Dick, constantly checking the progress of the slot machine. The plan was for Dick to

work on the interior mechanics and for me to work on the exterior shell. I knew I had a long time to wait before I could get started on my part, so I began concentrating my efforts on the images for the slot machine.

Originally, I had intended to shoot images of famous water sites. Ridiculous, post card-type shots ranging from locations in my home state of Florida to the northern New York state area.

I took advantage of a long Christmas break in Florida to do some shooting. I went out on several occasions but I did not feel right about what I was photographing. For years I had been shooting interiors with black and white film and handcoloring the images. The idea of working outside and using color film was new to me. I felt like I was taking pictures for the first time. I had to learn to see things differently. I forced myself to keep shooting as a learning experience.

I was not too worried because I knew this was a necessary step before I would get the control and confidence I needed to make the images I wanted.

Upon my return to Rochester, I realized that shooting famous water sites of the area was not going to be easy. Several times I drove out to locations, only to be disappointed and discouraged by the flat lighting, the colorless sky and the low temperature.

Interior pool shots were my solution. I went through the phone book and got the names and addresses of all the

hotels and motels advertising pools. Within a few days, I had photographed over twenty sites and used approximately fifteen rolls of 120 film. I felt confident with the results.

Three weeks before my scheduled opening in April, I took a short weekend trip to Florida. I drove directly from the airport to the hotels on the beach. This time I found my only problem was lack of time and film. I was excited and could see more photographs than I could actually shoot. I worked until the sun went down, feeling satisfied about what I had photographed.

The images for the slot machine, fortunately, had to be the same size as my negative. All I needed were good quality contact sheets as final prints.

The slot machine required a total of twenty-four images, eight sets of three images. I ended up with over forty sets of images, then I began the tedious process of editing. I kept going over the group, each time eliminating my least favorite set until I was left with about fifteen sets. I then turned to my husband and my roommates for their opinions and we completed the final edit.

I had, by this point, already begun construction of the outside shell of the slot machine. I got precise and accurate measurements from Dick Norman on the interior space needed for the slot machine and on the exact position of the viewing window for the photographs.

I knew I had to have one removable panel so that the

interior workings of the slot machine could be slipped in and out. I also needed some sort of door on top to refill the water reservoir for the squirter. I had to build two squirting mechanisms, the latter of which fit and worked better.

To build the slot machine I again used $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Baltic Birch plywood because of its quality. Since I was well prepared, the cutting and construction of this piece seemed easier than the construction of the puzzle piece.

Once I had built the outer shell, I brought it in to Dick Norman and we tried the two pieces together. We both knew that the slightest error in measurement could have been disastrous. To our delight, the two parts fit perfectly.

I eagerly took my section home and began the sanding and finishing process. I sanded the slot machine smooth and then applied eight light coats of white semi-gloss spray paint.

For decoration I made two wooden palm trees using a wooden coat hanger for the tree trunks and some plywood for the palms. For the top of the slot machine I made a small black wooden camera to cleverly hide the squirting hose.

Once the cosmetics were complete, I sealed the interior of the slot machine with waterproof caulking and brought the piece in to Dick Norman. After some small adjustments were made we put the completed parts together.

The display was now my major concern. I built a

pedestal for the slot machine from 4 by 4 inch treated pine and 3/4 inch plywood. After it was completed, I put the slot machine on the pedestal and checked it for size. It was perfect for me. What I did not realize was that a person shorter than me would have a rough time seeing the images. Instead of making adjustments on the pedestal, I decided to build a small platform as a step-up. I painted both items semi-gloss white.

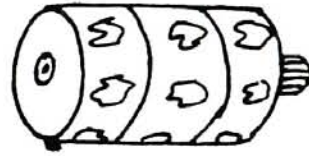
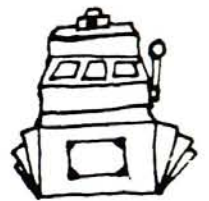
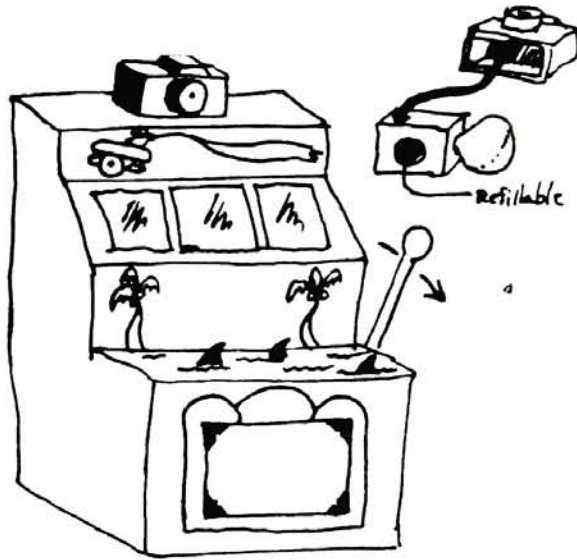
I did not want the slot machine to stand alone. I wanted to create an environment for it that would catch the viewer's attention and draw them towards the piece. I decided to use a colorful 5 by 8 foot wall mural of a beach scene as a backdrop.

A rubber seagull and a paper towel dispenser completed the display.

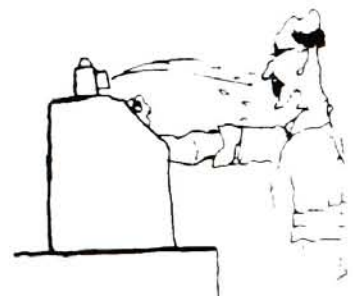
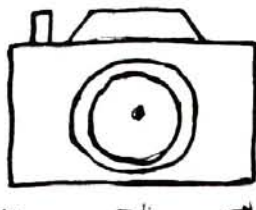
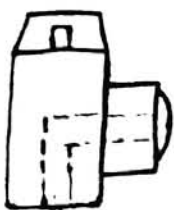
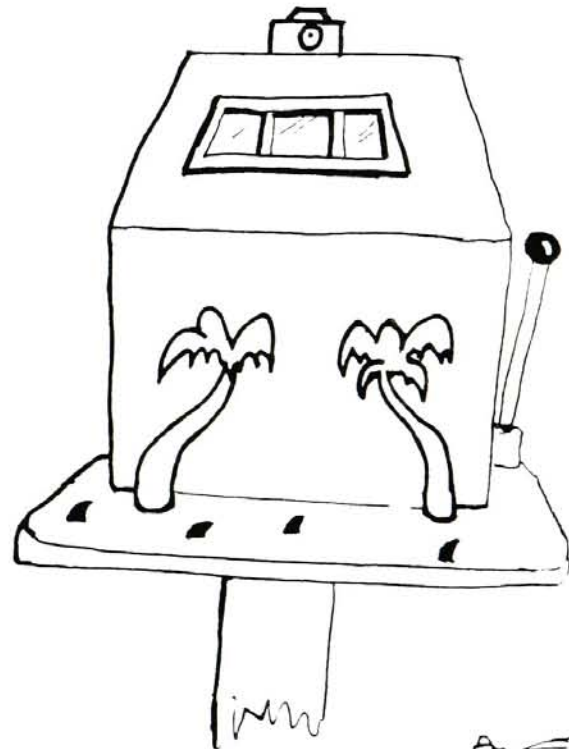
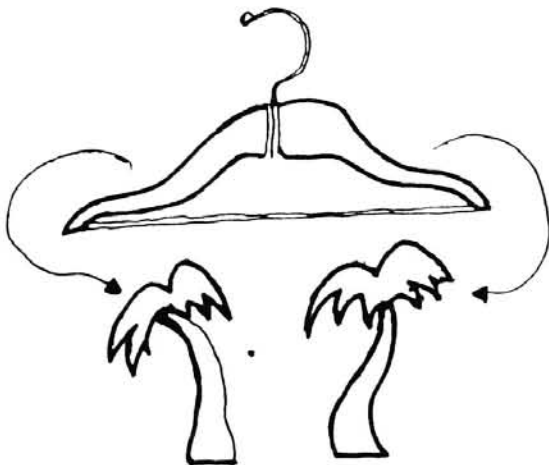
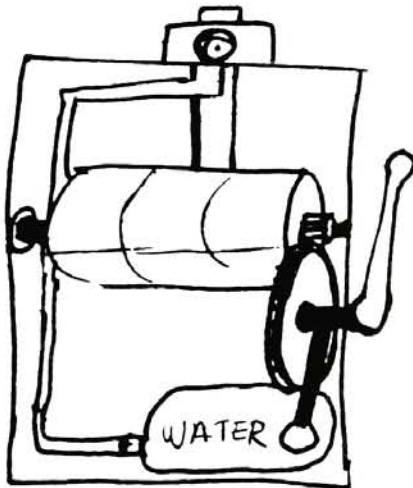
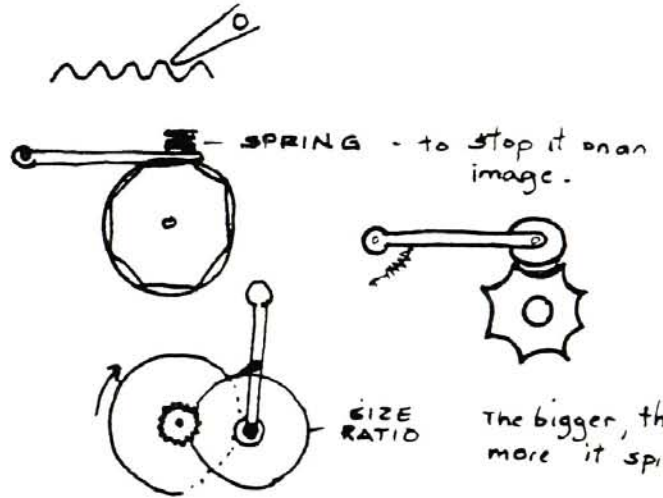
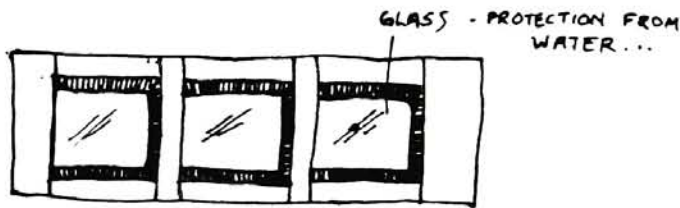
Lighting for this piece was a bit more difficult than for the other pieces. I had to use four lights, two directly overhead and one at each side, to avoid harsh shadows from the slot machine window and from people standing in front of it.

After it was properly lit, the total display turned out to be a bright attraction and served to catch the viewer's attention.

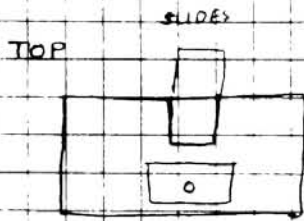
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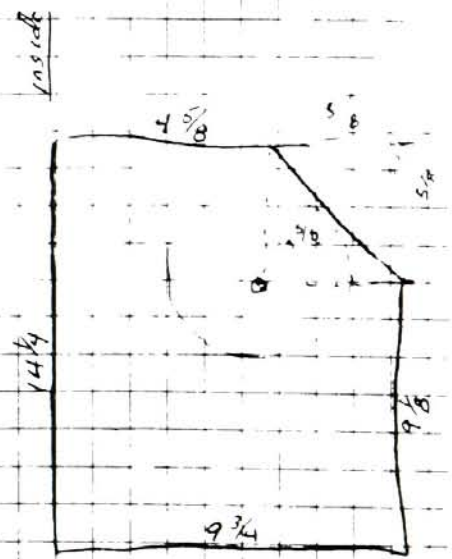
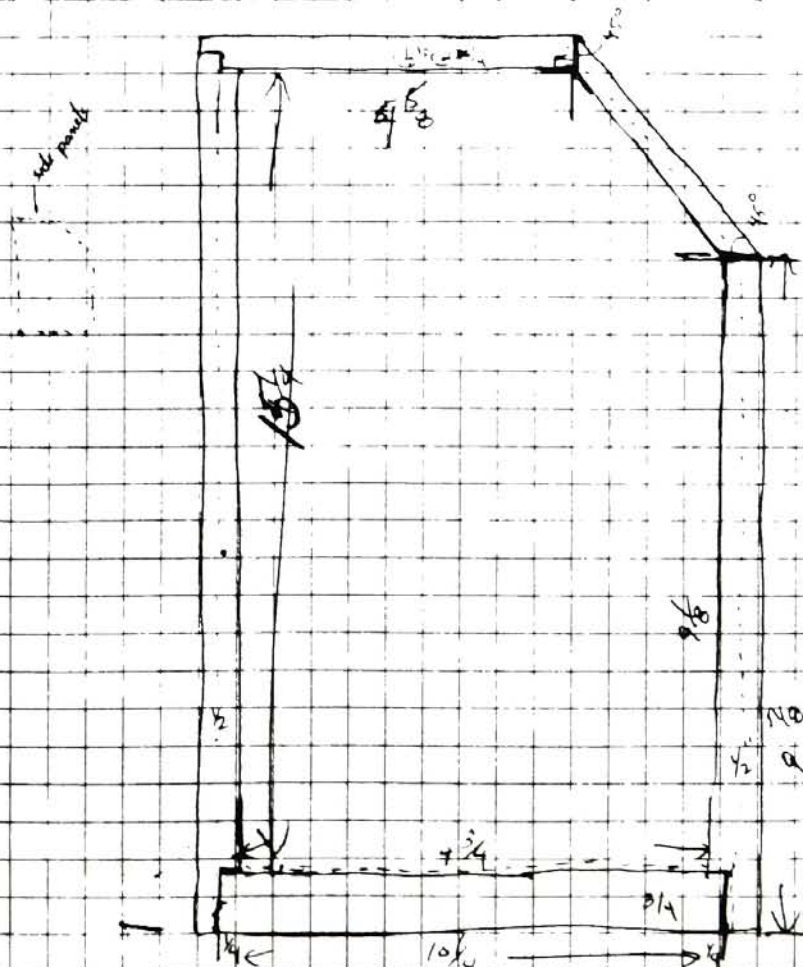
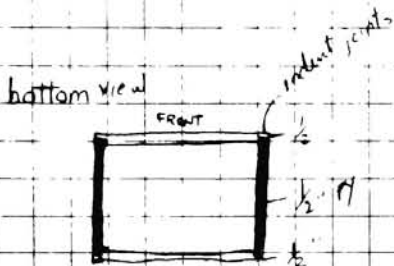
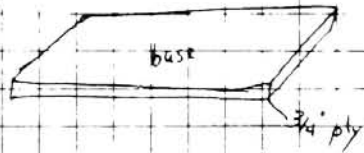
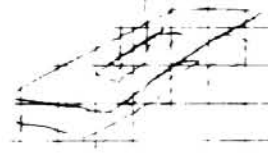
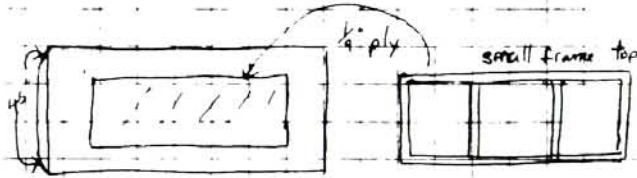
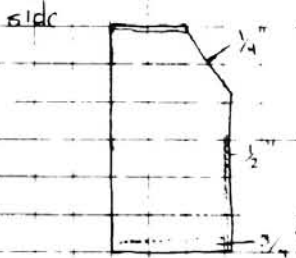
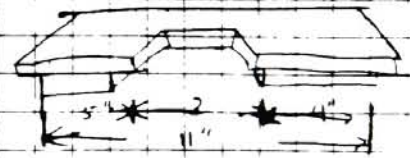
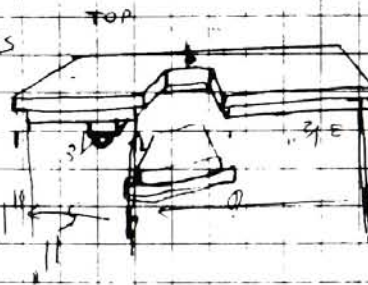
6" - 8" diameter
CYLINDER



SLOT MACHINE



③ 9 slaps





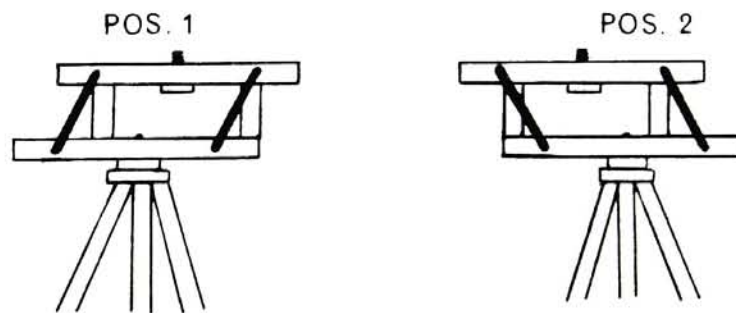


Stereo Cubes

One of my first purchases upon arriving in Rochester was a stereoscopic viewer. I was excited and fascinated by the three-dimensional effect.

The fact that one has to become directly involved in order to view the images in three-dimensions made it a logical and inevitable choice for my thesis exhibit.

I began asking questions and doing research on stereo photography. During my research, I came across an old book in the library which showed a device that, when attached to a tripod, could be used to shoot stereos. With some minor alterations, I built a similar device and proceeded to make stereo images. My first test roll was successful.



I knew I wanted to enhance the experience of actually viewing the stereo images but I had no definite plans as to how I would go about it.

Around this time, a friend of mine was moving and she decided to discard an old, broken, weather-beaten rocking chair that had previously furnished her porch. Knowing

about my infatuation with old broken furniture, chairs in particular, she offered me the rocking chair. The challenge was too great to pass up.

For two weeks I stripped, sanded and glued the rocker. Lastly, I painted it with a black semi-gloss acrylic to accentuate the form.

I was photographically attracted to the simple yet strong design of the rocking chair. This was when I decided to use the rocker as an integral part of the exhibition, as well as of the imagery.

From the beginning, I visualized the experience of viewing the three-dimensional images as solitary and private. I envisioned a small, dimly lit space with one, possibly two, spot lights directing the viewer's attention to the images and using the rocking chair as a necessary aid for viewing the stereos.

The design for this display underwent countless transformations, from a 3-D viewing helmet, to an elaborate system of ropes and pulleys, to the final, simplest and most practical design of using handles.

My first idea and design was a helmet with stereo viewing glasses attached. The helmet would be suspended from the ceiling, using the same pulley system that is used for the vertical movement of lamps. This was feasible, and probably would have been a display worth developing, but due to the short focal length of the stereo viewers, the image size would have had to be under 4 inches. Since I

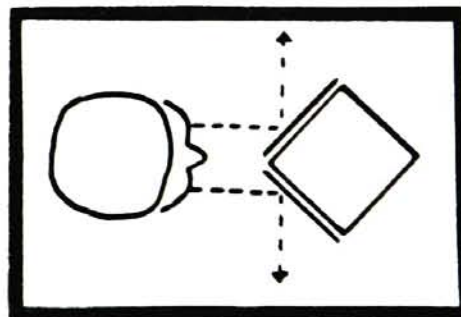
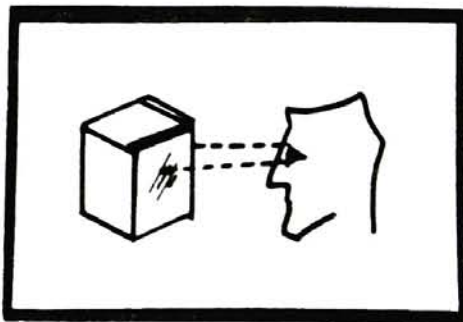
was already displaying twenty-four small images for the slot machine, I wanted to display large photographs in this exhibit.

I abandoned the helmet idea and proceeded to design complicated displays taking advantage of the rocking motion of the chair in order to view the photographs. Due to the laws of gravity and motion, I was forced to retire these impossible ideas (see Journal Sketches p.33).

In an effort to clear my mind and get a fresh start, I made a list of my criteria and objectives for the display.

Basically, I wanted to view large stereo photographs which incorporated the rocking chair as part of the imagery as well as of the display.

One way to view large stereo images is by using two mirrors, placed at 45 degree angles from the images. When you look into the left mirror with your left eye and into the right mirror with your right eye, your brain translates the information into three dimensions. Using this method I could display more than one large image by either moving the mirrors or by moving the photographs.



With this knowledge, I designed another ridiculously complicated display involving 250 feet of rope, hooks and springs. Theoretically the design seemed perfect and a small model I had made seemed to perform the function for which it was intended. In practice it turned out to be a different story.

I was so sure of my design that I began construction of it. I made a 4 by 5 foot platform for the rocking chair to give it more elegance and importance. Then I built a pair of 15 by 15 inch plywood cubes for the photographs.

The cubes had to turn and stop in a specific spot so that the stereo images could be properly viewed. For the rotating motion, I used some "Lazy Susan" bearings that I accidentally, and fortunately, came across in the hardware store. Cabinet bullet catches were ideal for reliably stopping the cubes in the proper spot for stereo viewing.

I also needed a post for the viewing mirrors. It had to be placed directly in front of the rocking chair and be carefully centered between the two cubes. For a sharper image reflection it was necessary to use front surface mirrors.

By now I had completed the basic structure of the display. The time had come to test out the system of ropes that were to turn the cubes at the viewer's control. Our dining room was suddenly transformed into a display testing area. I anxiously sat in the rocking chair and pulled on

one of the color coded ropes, confidently expecting the cube to turn and stop in the predetermined spot. I cleverly deduced that something was wrong when I began to fray the 400 pound test rope. I struggled to pull the rope as hard as I could, only to watch the cube move a miserable inch, then come to a dead stop.

It was back to the drawing board. Having only a couple of weeks left till the opening of the exhibit, I was frustrated, nervous and on the verge of panicking.

With help from my husband, I came up with an alternative method. This plan was simpler and sure to work. We substituted the elaborate series of ropes for a system of handles that the viewer could easily reach while sitting in the rocking chair. After looking at the first image through the mirror, the viewer would simply pull back the handles and the next stereo image would fall right into place. This design effectively solved the display problem.

On the rare occasions when the sun was out, I quit working on the display and went photographing the stereo images. I gathered my rocking chair and camera equipment and set out to explore the image possibilities in Rochester. I drove the rocking chair to various locations around the city and made the stereo photographs using 120 film, in both color and black and white.

I wanted the display to have four totally different types of images, so that each stereo experience would be new and unpredictable.

I photographed over forty sets of images. Of those, I chose to display four; one straight color image, one handcolored black and white image, one black and white photograph on which I experimented with the photo oils and lastly, a color image with composite elements.

The straight color image I chose was of the rocking chair inside the Highland Park Greenhouse. It was colorful and showed the depth of the space better than many of the other images.

The handcolored black and white photograph was an interior, more in the style I am accustomed to shooting. It was a symmetrical composition of the rocking chair centrally located in an empty room. I covered the rocking chair in plastic because of the interesting handcoloring possibilities it offered with the transparent overlapping layers. Two sets of star-shaped Christmas lights, diagonally crossing the room from front to back, served to create depth and enhance the three-dimensional effect. I handcolored the image with subtle peach and brown tones. I played with the layers and reflections from the plastic using violets and greens.

The next photograph was a black and white image of the rocking chair absurdly facing a blank drive-in screen in the empty Starlight Drive-In. A tangled speaker chord divided the white screen into sections. I took advantage of these spaces to experiment with the stereo effect. On one of the stereo photographs, I colored half of the screen's

sections with viridian green and left the other half white. I did the exact opposite on the other stereo image. When you viewed the images through the mirrors, there was a flickering effect upon the color on the screen.

The last image was a color, outdoor photograph of a large plaster deer, which I placed in the extreme foreground of the photograph. The rocking chair, which was facing the deer, served as the mid-ground and rows of evergreens filled in the background.

For this image, I also photographed an 8 inch doll of a hunter with a gun. After some calculations for shooting close-up stereos, I photographed the doll in a seated position.

I printed the photographs, carefully cut out the doll images and placed them on the appropriate background image, so that the hunter would appear to be sitting comfortably in the rocking chair, looking at the deer.

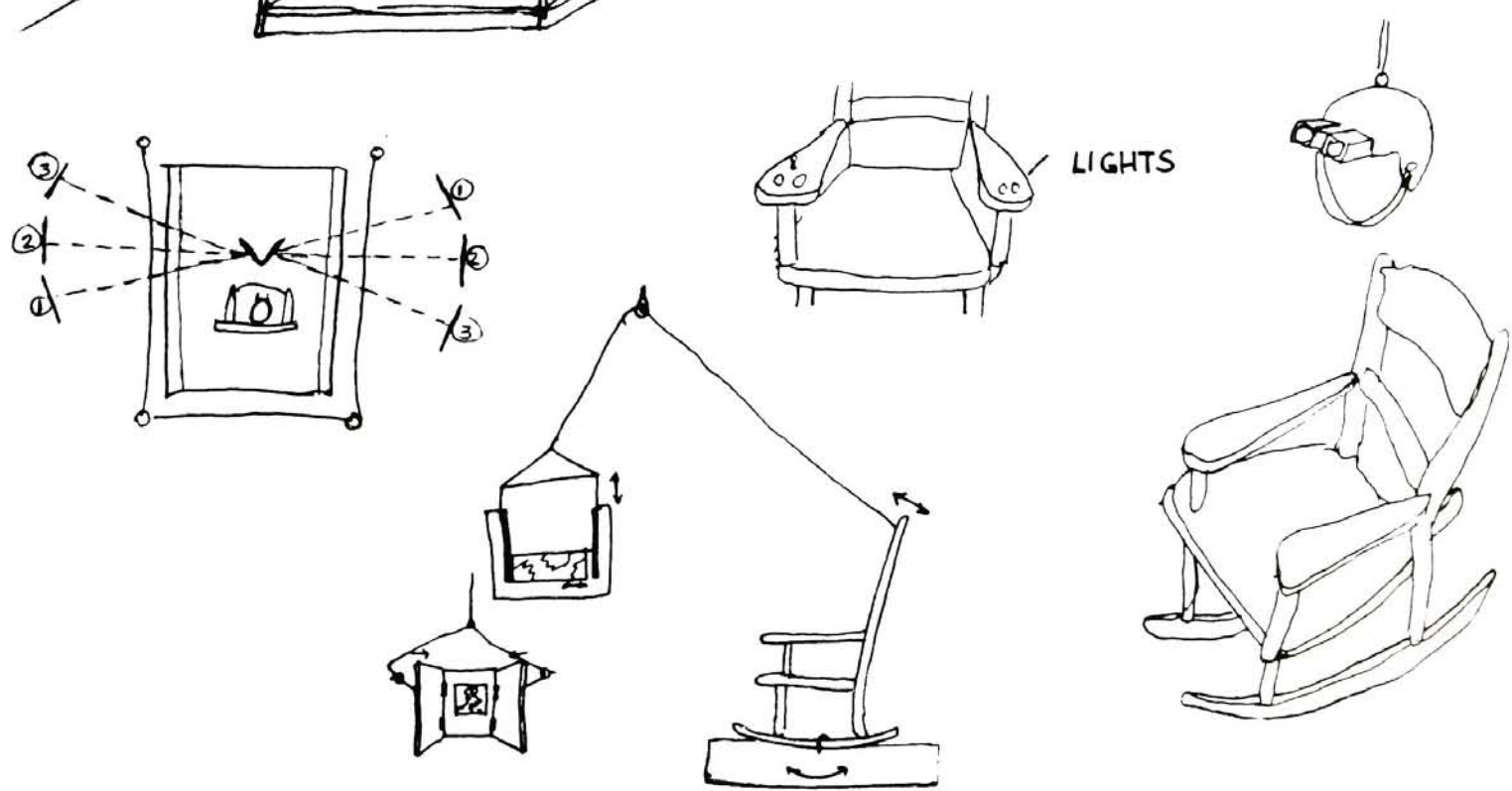
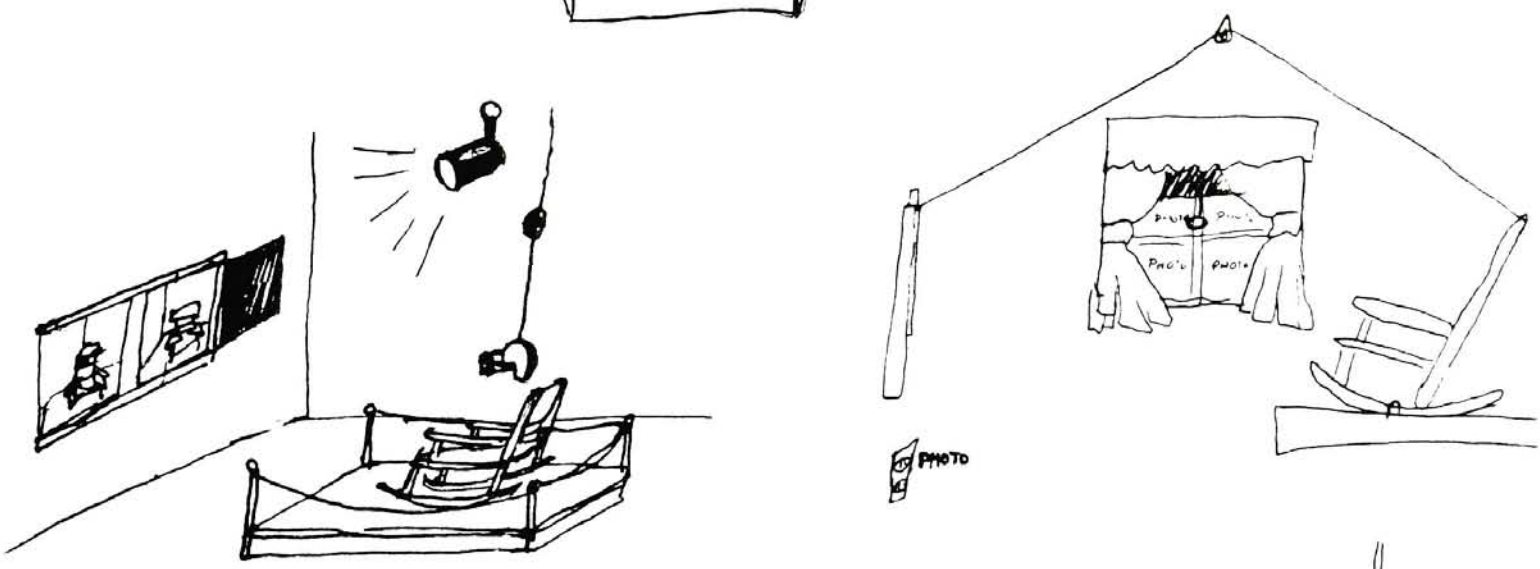
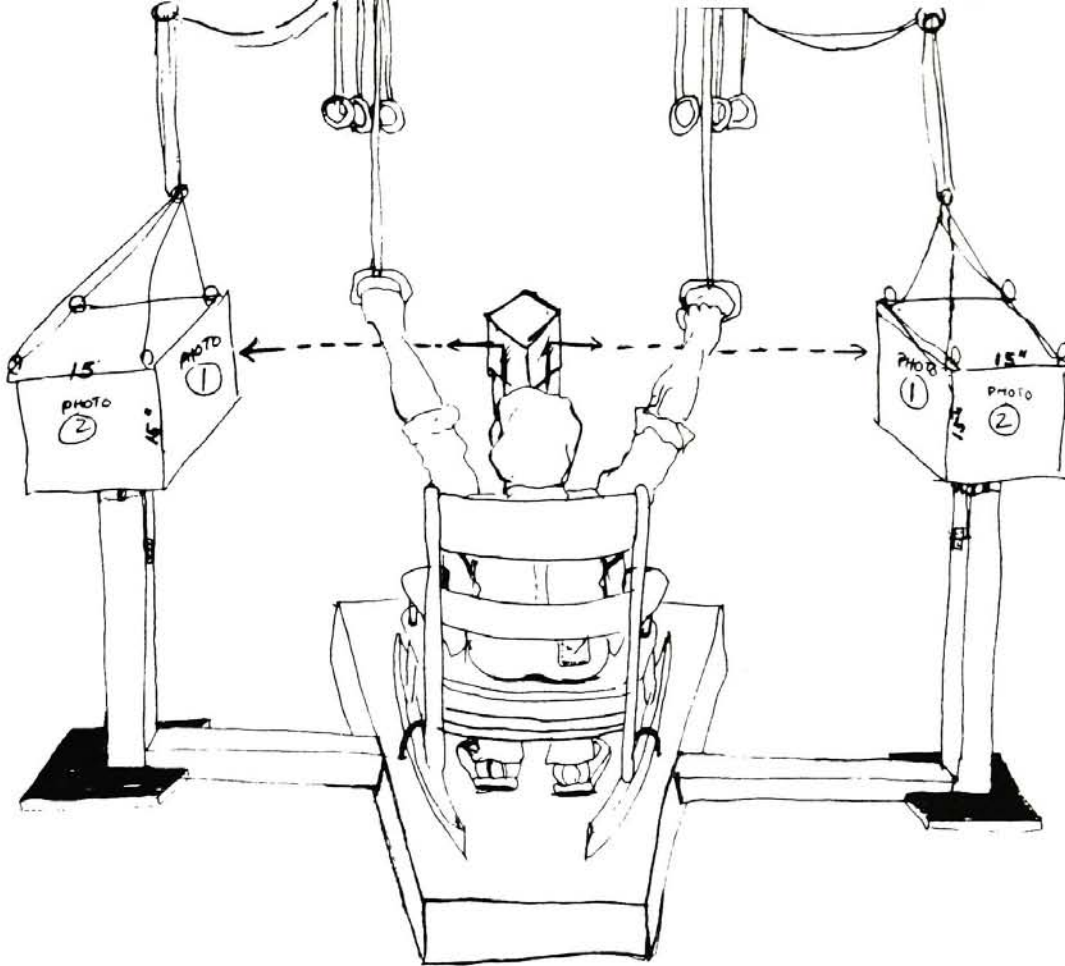
I was not sure how the cut-outs would look when viewed through the mirrors. The possibility existed that the cut-outs would appear to be floating on the surface instead of becoming part of the image.

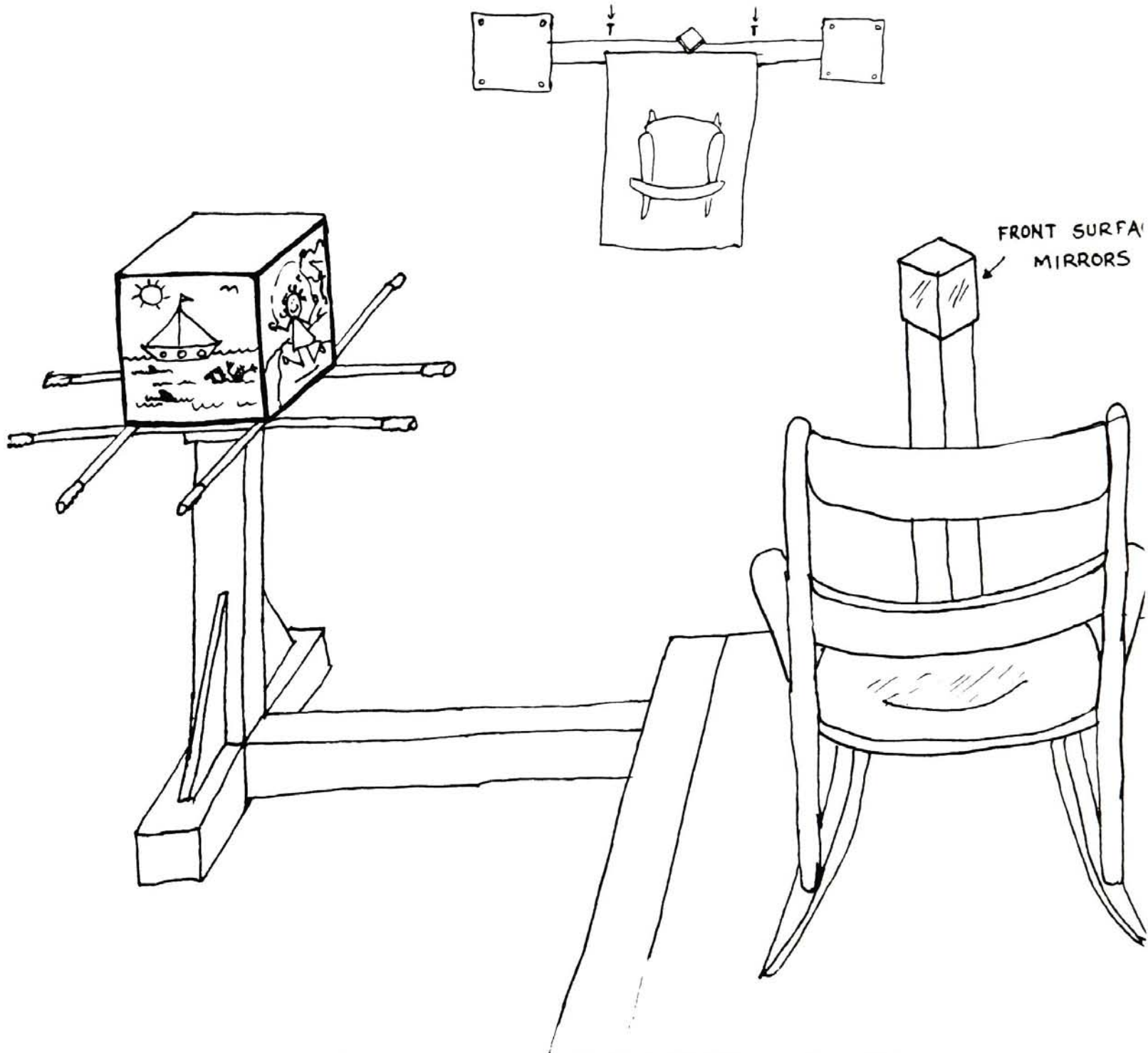
While looking through the mirrors, I carefully positioned the photographic cut-outs of the doll on the photographs of the background. Fortunately, the doll blended in well with the image when viewed in three dimensions.

The night before the opening I began to set up the entire display in the gallery for the first time. For

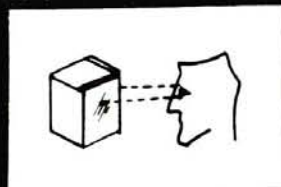
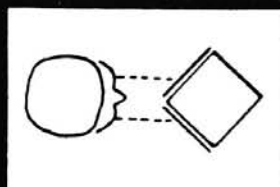
reasons unknown to me, the display did not work. My husband and I desperately took the display apart in the hope of finding and solving the problem. After a couple of hours we realized that the gallery floor was not level, consequently throwing the stereo cubes off register. With some minor adjustments, the display was functioning and complete.

I used two spot lights, each directed at one of the cubes. The atmosphere of the final display turned out close to my original conception. The time and effort spent on the piece finally paid off.

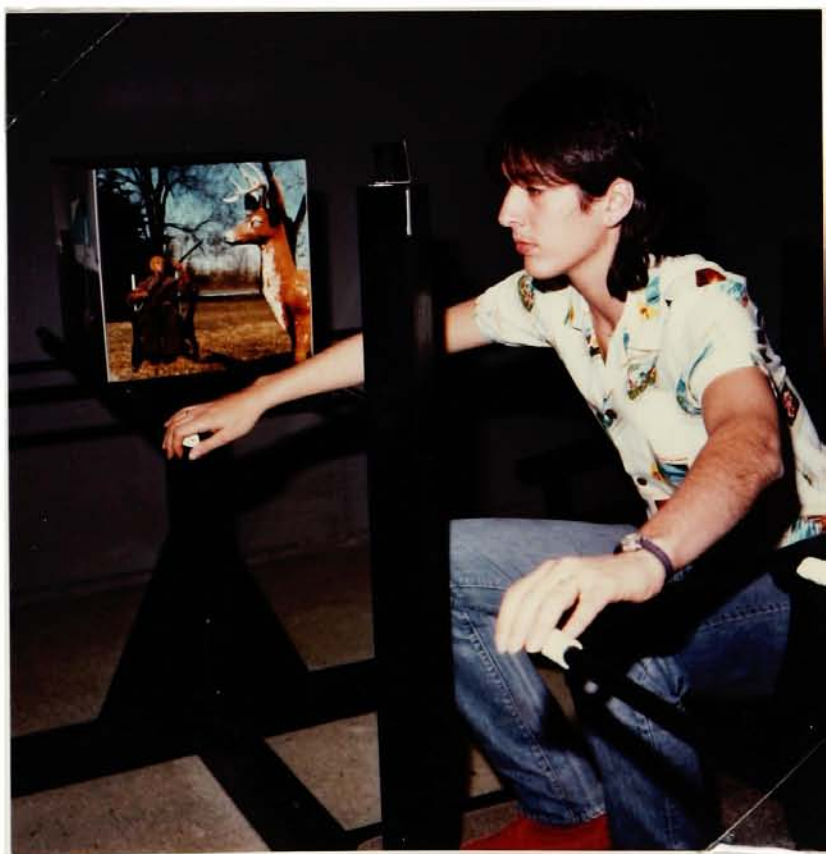




1. SIT DOWN
2. PULL HANDLES TILL MATCHING IMAGES FACE EACH OTHER
3. LOOK INTO MIRRORS IN FRONT OF YOU







Dancing TV

Life without television is like a day without sunshine. Or is that orange juice? Whatever the answer, television's influence on me has been great, to say the least.

Having been raised in a household that primarily spoke Spanish, I first learned how to speak English by watching television. I am proud to say that I have been a faithful fan ever since.

The last display I will discuss is entitled "Dancing TV". It is both a tribute and a response to the "hardware" of television as opposed to the intellectual or lack of intellectual content of television programming.

It would be rare, these days, to enter someone's home and not see that familiar picture tube prominently displayed in the living room, family room and/ or bedroom. This is the phenomena to which I chose to respond.

It is difficult for me to speak about this piece in a logical and organized manner because of the many diverse elements that made up the exhibit. By pushing a button, the viewer would activate a display which was a combination of imagery, music and dance.

I guess it all really started the day I found an old, wooden, Early American style television set in the garbage pile of a TV repair store. I was not sure what I was going to do with the set at the time but, within minutes, the television was in my car and on its way home.

I proudly carried in my "catch of the day" and started the tedious process of cleaning and gutting the set. I ended up with an empty TV cabinet, which was just begging to become part of my thesis exhibit.

It did not take long for me to decide that I would put a moving photographic display, where the picture tube once had been. Luckily, I just happened to have previously purchased a very slow moving (9 rpm) rotary motor which was perfect for the exhibit. Everything was starting to fit together.

My problem now was that I wanted the image to have a pendulum motion, so that it would swing back and forth. Unfortunately, the motor I owned had a circular motion.

I tried for days to figure out how to turn a circular motion into a pendulum motion, without success. I finally gave up and headed straight for Dick Norman's office. Within seconds, he had sketched an embarrassingly simple device that would solve my problem. I needed a minor alteration on the shaft of the motor and an accompanying pendulum type mechanism, to accomplish the motion I wanted.

I was now ready to make the image. For weeks I was bringing home broken television sets from garbage piles and was storing them in the basement. I knew that I would eventually use the sets for the image, but I had not yet figured out how.

The day came when I decided to shoot the photograph for the television display. I instinctively cleared my

dining room of furniture and lined up the TV sets across the back of the room. The image seemed to make itself. The hardwood floors and the horizontal division of the room reminded me of a dance studio. The television sets were personified as anxious dancers awaiting their turn for an audition. For atmosphere, I added an assortment of appropriate props: a Carmen Miranda lamp, a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers poster and some 8 by 10 inch glossies of dancers.

I set up my lights and photographed thirty shots of the set-up with a wide angle lens and 120 black and white film. Each time I slightly varied either the composition, the camera angle or the camera height. At this time I also shot the image for the TV which was to be the "star". I left the camera in approximately the same position as for the background shot and I placed a TV in the center of the stage, where it would appear to be dancing.

I did not want a blank screen on the dancing TV, so I used a television image that was a diagram of a girl doing the "Twist", with silhouettes of some dancers in the background. I had shot this image from the television almost two years before and while looking for another negative, I came across this image, quite by accident. All the pieces were fitting together perfectly for this exhibit.

I printed a 16 by 20 inch image of the background, the image of the dancing TV frame and the image for the

TV frame of the girl doing the Twist. I handcolored all three images realistically, concentrating the brightest colors on the detailed areas.

The addition of sound was inevitable. I purchased a radio for the television set that would broadcast both radio and TV signals. I originally intended to use one of the television channels, but after finishing the display, an "oldies" music station seemed more appropriate.

Figuring out the mechanics of this piece was challenging and rewarding. I wanted music, dancing and a light to go on simultaneously, at the flick of a switch. After asking some questions and from my own limited knowledge of basic wiring and safety, I was able to successfully put the piece together. To my amazement, it all worked the first time.

This piece, like the others I made, would have been lost without the proper atmosphere. I wanted to recreate a very homey, family type of environment to comfortably display the television.

I chose a traditional, warm-toned wall paper for the background. A sofa, lamp, table and some plants all served to enhance the home environment I was trying to achieve.

An important part of the display, for me, was the family photographs. Almost two years ago, my mother handed me a shoe box loaded with thousands of poorly kept and disorganized family negatives. I spent weeks going through them trying to create some kind of order from the chaos.

I kept coming across negatives I had never seen printed before. I chose a few of the more ridiculous and typical family pictures to display. For reasons of absurdity and exaggeration, I framed the large black and white family portrait in a plastic TV frame. I placed the other family pictures of seven Cuban refugees visiting the Nation's Capital, in a typical spot, on top of the television set.

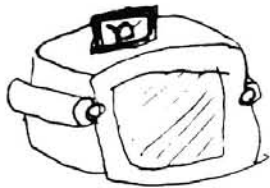
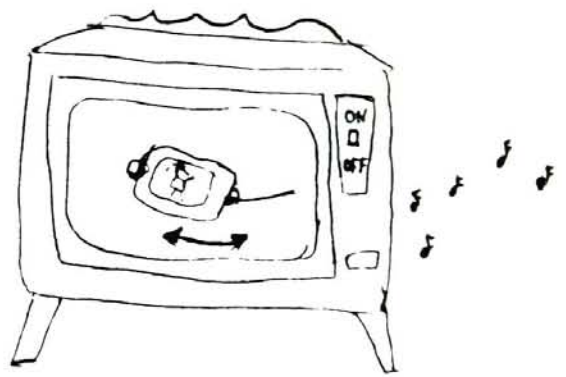
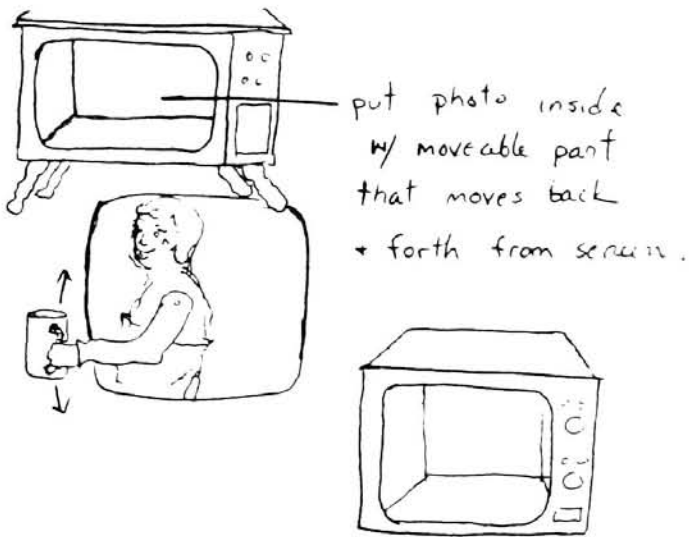
To finish off the display and add to the participation element of my thesis, I stenciled a Cuban dance step called "Merengue" on the floor in front of the TV.

I also supplied the public with a free instruction sheet on how to do the Twist.

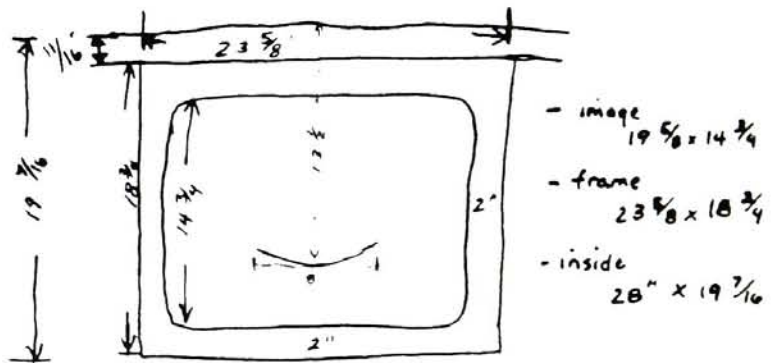
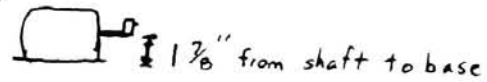
During the opening, I saw many people dancing in front of the TV set with either instruction sheet in hand or with their feet carefully following the pattern of the stenciled dancing feet.

This piece was the most fun and least frustrating to make. It was a combination of many elements which are important to me and which I really enjoy; such as TV, dancing, music and my family, not necessarily in that order.

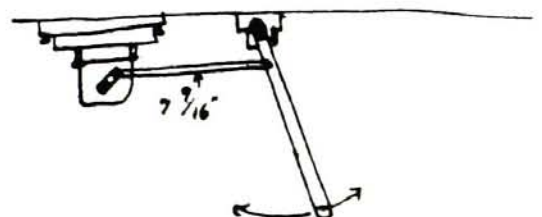
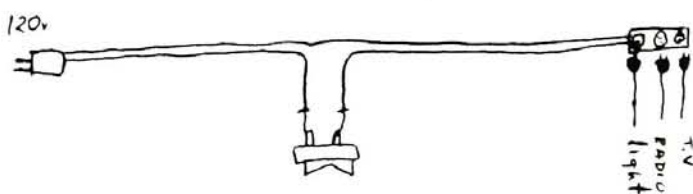
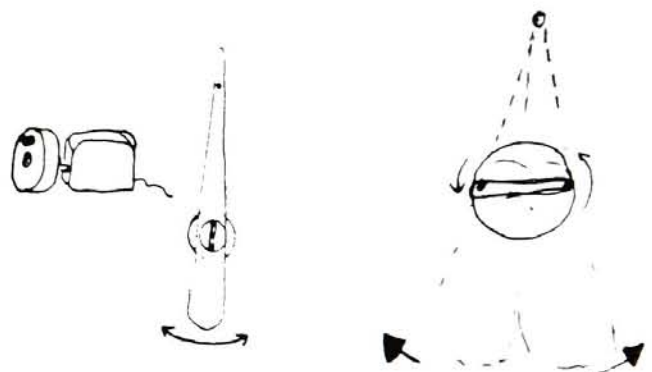
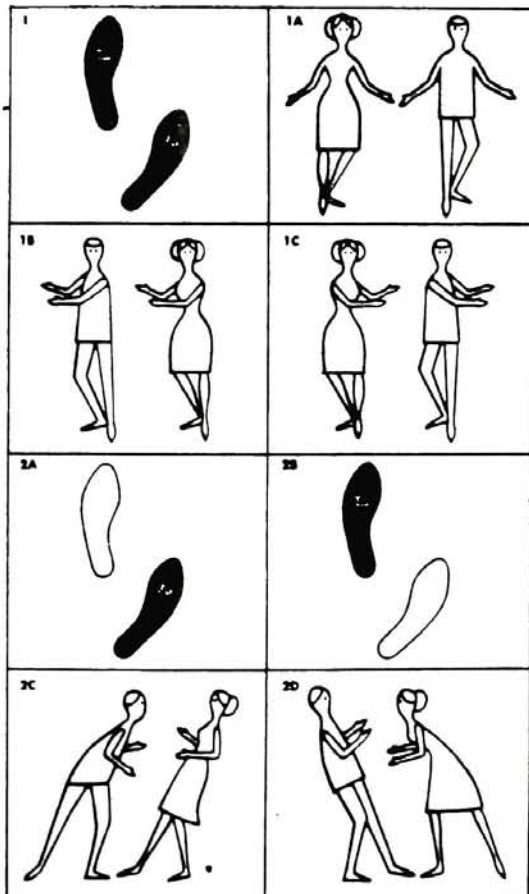
To complete the display, I used one spotlight for the television and a couple of broader lights for general fill light in the room.



- motor



$2 \frac{1}{2} \times (3 \times 4)$ motor







Throughout the development of my thesis, I was in continuous contact with Bea Nettles, the chairperson of my board. Although I was unable to show her the actual pieces while they were under construction, I kept her informed on my progress through elaborate descriptions, sketches and photographs. Bea was extremely supportive and helpful throughout the entire ordeal. She generously offered her time and knowledge during the hectic and confusing times that preceded my thesis exhibit.

I met my second board member, John Dodd, when I enrolled in my first woodworking course. He was very knowledgeable and always willing to assist me. From the very beginning, John allowed me to do my own work and was extremely accomodating by allowing me to work in the Wood Shop during all his class hours and by taking the time to ensure the success of whatever I was working on.

Charles Werberig was my third board member. I had previously met Charles when I enrolled in a course he taught for the graduate students. I felt he was very perceptive and I respected and valued his opinion.

My Technical Advisor, Dick Norman, was amazing. I was constantly in awe of his knowledge and ability to solve technical problems, not to mention his sense of humor.

I have the utmost gratitude for Bea, John, Charles and Dick, who made my life much easier during the tense and frustrating times that accompanied my thesis.

CONCLUSION

This presentation was a combination of technology and craftsmanship controlled by my aesthetic sensibilities. Through research, trial and error, and help from friends and instructors, I was able to realize my plans for an interactive and entertaining photographic display.

The general response to the work was very positive. At this point, I am still excited about the fusion of photography with other media and plan to continue working in this direction.

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THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

APPENDIX

THESIS PROPOSAL

PHOTO CONSTRUCTIONS

Silvia Lizama
Master of Fine Arts Program
Rochester Institute of Technology
October 22, 1982

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most special thanks I could imagine go to my husband Joe Gillis for making this thesis exhibit possible.

A very special thanks go to my good friends Debbie Mosch, Steve Mosch and Dick Norman for their important contributions to this show.

I must also thank my board Bea Nettles, John Dodd and Charles Werberig for their time, knowledge and support.

I must also thank Lorna Secrest and Dan from Woodworking, Dana Davis, Edie Freedman, Rick Harrington, Connie McCabe, Chris O'Connor and Gerry Thies.

THESIS BOARD

Chairperson: Bea Nettles
Associate Professor
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

Charles Werberig
Associate Professor
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

John Dodd
Lecturer
College of Fine and Applied Arts
Rochester Institute of Technology

Technical
Advisor: Richard Norman
Technical Associate
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To exhibit a group of playful photographic mixed media pieces to be viewed and/or manipulated purely for the sake of visual delight and entertainment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

From an academic background in ceramic sculpture, my work shifted toward the two dimensional and eventually to hand colored photography.

During my artistic evolution, I found myself drawn to and influenced by artists whose work predominantly displayed a sense of humor. These artists include photographers Elliott Erwitt, Robert Fichter and Marcia Resnick; sculptors Marisol Escobar, Red Grooms and Christine Frederighi; painters Rene Magritte, Roy Lichtenstein and Paul Klee; drawings by Saul Steinberg and Claes Oldenburg and cartoonists Gahan Wilson, Rube Goldberg, Gary Larson and Brad Holland.

I am also interested in artists who combine various media in unconventional and surprising ways; artists such as Joseph Cornell and Robert Heinecken.

The idea of the "ready made" has influenced me as well. I have long been a collector of unusual, but generally overlooked, objects and toys.

These elements and influences are basic to my personality and artistic sensibilities. Rather than dwelling on the seriousness of life I prefer to appreciate and communicate the lighter side.

PROCEDURE

The idea for this thesis stems from the desire to spend time on a project which I will thoroughly enjoy and which, I hope, will entertain others.

For the past few months I have been collecting materials which I feel might be suitable for a mixed media thesis project. I have found and purchased items and stores, flea markets, junk yards and garbage piles with the intent of using them in collaboration with photographic images.

The most time consuming portion of my work will be the actual construction of the pieces in combination with photographic images. Since much of the work will be constructed of wood, I have enrolled in a woodworking course and plan to continue this course work throughout the year.

Research has already enabled me to work out some of the engineering problems I have encountered in design and construction.

The photographs will be shot, for the most part, with a medium format camera. I intend to incorporate hand coloring into some of the images when I feel it is appropriate.

My plan is to work solely on my thesis Winter and Spring quarters. I hope to display the thesis exhibit in the ninth week of Spring quarter.

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and Pearce, 1945.
- Wilson, Gahan. "...And Then We'll Get Him!". New York:
Richard Marek Publishers, 1978.

Signed, Silvia Lizama

10/22/82

Approved: Bea Nettles

10/22/82